

ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

000 agricultural season the Vaddars accept other work also for extra wages.

564 The Erkalas earn their livelihood through a variety of means.
 224 The menfolk are hunters. They are also adept in the use of snares and traps. They train hunting dogs and use them effectively for chasing and tracking wounded animals. When they succeed in getting some game, they retain a part of it for their domestic consumption and sell the rest to the villagers. The women beg in the countryside by singing songs and narrating legends. They also do some fortune-telling. Family earnings are supplemented by basket-making, a task at which both men and women work. They also rear pigs.

THE MADIGAS

564 The Madigas are the lowest caste in Shamirpet. Economically
 241 they constitute the poorest section of the community. While the
 465 Malas, who are also untouchables but a degree higher than the Madigas, either cultivate their own land or work as farm labourers for daily wages, the Madigas affiliate themselves to the households of the substantial agriculturists in the village. According to the size of the land-holding of the cultivator, one or more Madiga families permanently attach themselves to him. At every stage of agricultural operations during the year the attached Madiga, and his wife and children, work in the fields of their master. They are not paid any daily wages. After the crops are harvested they have to go and 'beg' in the master's fields or threshing grounds. The conventions of the community have prescribed the rates of payment, mostly on the basis of the area of land under cultivation and the yield during the particular harvest. Thus for a certain area a basic minimum must be given; but if on account of good crops the yield has been high it is expected that the affiliated Madiga family would be given a proportionately larger share. In former times there used to be considerable compulsion, and, being in no position to protest, the Madigas had to slave for their masters, who could be quite ruthless. If the master was kind and considerate, they regarded it as their good luck. On the whole it was advisable for them to tolerate even a bad master, for any protests or refusal to do the allotted work on their part would eventually have meant their being forced to leave the village. Now, of course, conditions have changed, and Madigas do not any longer put up with indig-

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Moharram. On the tenth day in the month of Moharram, Imam Hussain, the grandson of Mohammed, was put to death in the plains of Karbala after being denied food and water for three days. Moharram is observed in honour of this martyr and his associates. On the Moharram day symbols of Imam Hussain and his family, known as *alums*, are taken out by the Muslims in a procession to a nearby river or tank. All along the route they beat their breasts and cry aloud 'O, son of Ali' or 'Hussain, Hussain' and wail over the martyr's death. *Tajia* or large paper models of his tomb are also taken out and immersed in water. In all Muslim households a sweet drink either of water and sugar, or of milk and sugar, is prepared and distributed among friends and relations. The giving of alms and charity on this day is believed to contribute greatly towards ensuring one's future. 796

Meelad Sharif. Unlike Moharram, which calls for mourning, Meelad Sharif is an occasion for rejoicing, as the Prophet Mohammed was born on the twelfth day of the month of Rabi-ul-Awwal. On the eleventh and twelfth days of this month people observe a fast. Muslim priests visit their homes, and passages from the Koran are read. Flowers and sweets are distributed in the name of Mohammed. The celebrations are continued for a month; although the festivities are at their peak on the two days mentioned above. 735 ●

Giarwin Sharif. This is an important festival for the Sunni sect of the Muslims. It is observed in honour of Abdul Kader Geelani who belonged to Mohammed's generation, and was regarded as a very pious and holy figure. On the eleventh day of the month of Rabi-us-sani, the Muslims of Shamirpet fly the flag of Abdul Kader on their houses, and offer sweets, flowers and prayers in the name of their hero.

Shabe Miraj. On the twenty-sixth day of Rajjub, accompanied by an angel, Mohammed is believed to have visited the seven heavens and hell. Later it is said that he had an audience with Allah himself. To celebrate this event, this day is expected to be spent in meditation and prayer. If possible people keep awake for the whole night saying prayers and asking for Allah's blessings.

Shabe Barat. On the night of the fourteenth day of Shaban, Muslims offer sweets and bread in the name of their deceased kin. They visit their graves and offer flowers and prayers. It is believed 769

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769 that on this day the spirits of the dead come out to see their relations and to receive presents from them. Later all Muslims—men and women (if they are not in their menstrual period)—say their prayers and ask for God's blessing for their long life. Also they read the Koran. This night is important in that it is now that Allah determines the course of the lives of his followers for the coming year.

776 *Ramzan*. Ramzan is the most important month in the religious year of the Muslims. As far as possible, people try to fast for the whole month. They can have food before dawn and after dusk, but in between even a drop of water is not permitted. During these days one should devote as much time as possible to meditation and prayer. The twenty-sixth day of the month is specially important because it was on this day that 'Mohammed received the Koran from Allah'. People wear new clothes on this day, read the Koran and say their prayers. There is considerable enthusiasm in evidence as all Muslims—men, women and children—say their prayers and seek God's blessings. The month-long fasting ends on the day they see the new moon. The next day is spent in festivity and is known as 'Id-ul-fitr'. People breakfast early and wear their best—possibly new—clothes. The men go to the mosque for their Id prayers. After the prayers they go round to their friends' houses meeting and greeting them. On this day and on the two days following a sweet preparation consisting of vermicelli, milk and dates is made, and portions of it are sent to friends and relations. It is desirable that those who can afford it should distribute $2\frac{1}{2}$ seers of grain per head to the poor and the needy.

[735] *Id-uz-zuha*. This festival is celebrated on the tenth day of the month of Zilhij. People get up early in the morning and without breakfast go to the mosque for their prayers. When they return home they sacrifice goats in the name of God. The general rule is that one goat is sacrificed in the name of each member of the family; but if this is not possible financially, a goat each may be sacrificed for each adult member of the household. Of course, even this is too much for many of the poorer Muslims, who sacrifice just one goat on behalf of the whole family. The meat of the sacrificed animals is cooked and people have their breakfast. Then they go round to meet and greet their friends. Delicacies and meat dishes are prepared in fairly large quantities and distributed among friends and relations.

653 cost of Rs. 5,000 were made, but nothing was practically done nor even a supervisor was appointed to look after the local public works.

These defects were not the monopoly of the 1st grade Panchayats alone. If check measurements were not made, estimates were not actually executed, plans that were put forward were allowed to lag, slackness continued, funds went on accumulating, while condition of roads gradually deteriorated due to the gross negligence even in major Panchayats in the 1st grade, the position in 2nd and 3rd grade Panchayats could not have been better.

[651] Often the plans of public works in the 2nd and 3rd grade Panchayats made no progress far from the resolutions of the Panchayat Board. For instance Ramchandrapuram and Mandapeta, Panchayats in the 2nd grade, were repairing their public roads once in 5 years or whenever they needed repairs. Schemes for construction of drainage and gutters were still under consideration and a drainage tax was introduced at the rate of 25 per cent of the house tax, but it was never utilised. Ramchandrapuram Panchayat had jurisdiction of over 100 roads which were to be maintained and repaired, but they were left in a helpless and unsatisfactory condition. The amount that was allotted for repairs of roads was very inadequate. Panchayats in other districts had nothing better to report. The same indifference, inadequate allotment of funds, irregular enforcement of even these assignments, and unsatisfactory conditions unchecked by Local Government Officials were the usual themes. In spite of their good financial position, Panchayats of the calibre of Tanuku and Tadepalligudam in West Godavari, Vuyyuru and Jaggayapeta in Kistna, Salur and Yelamanchili in Vizagapatam displayed deplorable indifference to this obligation. Some better examples of constructive Panchayats as Kampli and Rayadrug in Bellary, where better attention was being paid to communication were seen, but such instances were very few.

[735] Even among the 3rd grade Panchayats, there were some instances where the picture was not totally bleak. Razole in East Godavari, Kovvur, Ganapavaram, Peatapadu, Undi, Akividu, Achanta and Attrill in West Godavari, Gudur and Pedana in Kistna, Madugula and Chodavaram in Vizagapatam, Penu Konda and Gooty in Anantpur, were some of the Panchayats amongst those visited that showed some real signs of interest towards this important obligation. In these places, in addition to regular attention to roads, alms houses for beggars as in Razole were proposed; registers of length of roads and needs for periodic repairs were maintained and attended to; drains, culverts and platforms were constructed, the towns